

and hear the news being led off by the story: Another American soldier killed and more wounded.

Just so people understand the gravity of this, a wounded soldier is not a flesh wound in all cases. Some of these soldiers, our best and brightest in America, have lost limbs. Their lives have been damaged and changed forever. They are just listed as "wounded." But those wounds go deep and those families and those soldiers will bear them for many years to come.

That is where we are in this war in Iraq: This President ignoring the economic realities of America with the loss of jobs, ignoring what has happened because of the economic policy that has failed, refusing to acknowledge the cost of health insurance and these astronomical profits of the pharmaceutical companies, caving in to the special interests on Capitol Hill, ignoring the real people, the small businesses, the families across America who ask us to stand up for them. Instead, we are going to send \$87 billion to Iraq to try to build an economy there.

Sadly, we should start here. Let's build America's economy. Let's try to make sure we focus on what we need as a nation. This administration has not done that. The American people will awaken to that. Congress should as well.

I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. Will the Senator from Illinois yield for a question?

Mr. DURBIN. I am happy to yield.

Mr. REID. There are a number of strikes going on as we speak. The latest started in Los Angeles with all the transit drivers. That is a result of problems with health care. The problem with automobile manufacturers, the other strikes going on in America involve one issue: health care. So the Senator's statement regarding health care and this administration's total neglect is one of the most important domestic issues facing America today.

I appreciate very much the Senator's statement.

Mr. DURBIN. I say to the Senator from Nevada, through the Chair, this is a pervasive issue. It used to be you could separate on trade and health care, business on one side and labor on the other. If I took you into a room and did not tell you the origin of a group in a room and you listened to a business group on these issues of trade and health care, you would think you were in the labor group. If you went to a labor group, you would expect to hear some concerns about what trade policy in this country has done and what health care does.

I find over and over again that these people are despairing. They are despairing because they have been told by this administration, let the marketplace solve the problem. The marketplace has not solved the problem.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN SECURITY AND RECONSTRUCTION ACT, 2004

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ENZI). Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1689, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill, (S. 1689) making emergency supplemental appropriations for Iraq and Afghanistan security and reconstruction for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Byrd amendment No. 1818, to impose a limitation on the use of sums appropriated for the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund.

Byrd/Durbin amendment No. 1819, to prohibit the use of Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Funds for low priority activities that should not be the responsibility of U.S. taxpayers, and shift \$600 million from the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund to Defense Operations and Maintenance, Army, for significantly improving efforts to secure and destroy conventional weapons, such as bombs, bomb materials, small arms, rocket propelled grenades, and shoulder-launched missiles, in Iraq.

Reid (for Stabenow) amendment No. 1823, to provide emergency relief for veterans health care, school construction, health care and transportation needs in the United States, and to create 95,000 new jobs.

Bond/Mikulski amendment No. 1825, to provide additional VA Medical Care Funds for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Dorgan amendment No. 1826, to require that Iraqi oil revenues be used to pay for reconstruction in Iraq.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The democratic assistant leader.

Mr. REID. Madam President, Senator STEVENS is not here. I am covering the floor for Senator BYRD this morning. I am sure Senator STEVENS would have no objection to the Senator from New Mexico offering an amendment. I yield the floor for the Senator from New Mexico.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

AMENDMENT NO. 1830

Mr. BINGAMAN. I thank my colleague from Nevada.

Madam President, so there is no question about the opportunity for others to speak, I was asked if I would describe my amendment first and then at the end of my description I will ask to set aside the pending amendment and send my amendment to the desk. That is how I will proceed.

I intend to offer in a few minutes an amendment on behalf of myself, Senator LUGAR, Senator LIEBERMAN, Senator BAYH, Senator CLINTON, Senator DURBIN, Senator LANDRIEU, Senator LINCOLN, Senator SMITH, and Senator REID. This is an amendment to honor our service men and women in Iraq who are serving far from home, far from family, far from friends.

Let me indicate from the title of the amendment that I intend to send to the desk what it would do: to authorize the award of the Iraqi Liberation Medal as a campaign medal for members of the Armed Forces who serve in Southwest Asia in connection with Operation Iraqi Freedom.

These service men and women, as we all know, have left the security of this country and their home behind to provide freedom and security for those who have not known it for many years. The human cost has been substantial, over 300 American fighting men and women will never come home. There are over 1,200 who will return wounded, far higher than previous conflicts.

I have a chart that demonstrates the grim statistics, showing the casualties our military has incurred in recent conflicts. In Operation Desert Storm, with which we are all familiar, the casualties, total deaths were 382, killed in action, 143, and the wounded were 467. In the Kosovo campaign, there were 16 deaths. In Operation Iraqi Freedom, as of last week, there were 196 killed in action, 309 total deaths, and 1,268 wounds.

So the casualties have been significant. This is not a minor military activity. We have over 130,000 troops in the region. They remain to ensure that those who died and those who were wounded did not suffer and die in vain. They are also there to build a new Iraqi nation and to provide stability and freedom in that nation.

The liberation of Iraq is turning out to be the most significant military occupation and reconstruction effort, clearly, since the end of the Vietnam war and perhaps even before that. Despite their sacrifice and courage, these brave men and women will not, under current policy, be specifically recognized for their service in Iraq. Instead, the Department of Defense has decided to award them a Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal.

This issue was drawn to my attention by an article that appeared in the Army Times and the Navy Times and the Air Force Times called "One Size Fits All?" "The Pentagon plans to award one medal for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and for any future campaigns related to the war on terrorism."

I believe this is a mistake in policy, that our military personnel deserve better. Accordingly, my colleagues and I are offering this amendment to correct the mistake by ensuring there is authorized an Iraqi Liberation Medal in lieu of this Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal.

As all who have paid attention in the Senate know, some of us did not agree with the administration's decision to proceed in Iraq when it did, but clearly we have all been united in our support of the troops. Young men and women, both active-duty personnel and National Guard and Reserve, have come forward and done their duty. That is clearly the essence of patriotism, and we all respect that.